



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	II	Intake, Investigation and Response	
Chapter:	A	Screening	2-21-2012
Subchapter:	5	After-Hours	
Issuance:	300	After Hour Operation	

Day Staff Vs. SPRU Coverage 3-5-2012

See [CP&P-II-D-2-100](#), Day Staff Vs. SPRU Coverage.

Use of Special Instructions (Linking Case Planning to After-Hours Response) 2-21-2012

Field office staff are encouraged to call SCR and leave key information and case handling instructions when a crisis, a need for a specific service, or a significant development is anticipated on an open/active case, or a case at intake. Special Instructions are used for this purpose, to link day work with after-hours response/case handling activities. Field staff provide relevant information to SCR Screeners by telephone, who then record that information in NJS. The information is available electronically at SCR, easily accessed by on-duty screening staff, should a call come in after hours concerning the identified case.

Field staff are expected to call "Special Instructions" into the SCR Center during regular CP&P business hours (although SCR Screeners are available around-the-clock to record such reports, as necessary).

Special Instructions enable SCR Screeners, and SPRU staff, when activated, to respond with knowledge, insight, and purpose upon receipt of inquiries or notice concerning specific case situations/clients after hours. In the absence of Special Instructions, SCR has limited access to case information, depending entirely on New Jersey SPIRIT, which may contain outdated or incomplete information. In the absence of input from day staff -- Special Instructions describing the current situation and prescribing a course of action, if necessary -- an SCR Screener may unintentionally divert an important call, antagonize a client or resource who was under the impression from day staff that CP&P would act immediately upon receipt of his or her call, initiate the provision of duplicate services, etc.

The Worker must conference the case with his Supervisor before calling in Special Instructions to SCR. The conference serves the following purposes:

- To obtain supervisory approval for the case plan/instructions for emergency, after-hour intervention on a given case;
- To advise/update the Supervisor as to the case situation, should he or she be called after hours by SCR or SPRU to discuss the case plan; and
- To discuss the specific wording of, and details to be included in, the Special Instructions.

SCR accepts Special Instructions from Workers regarding the handling and status of investigations at Intake. In the absence of Special Instructions, however, SCR will advise callers to contact the CP&P Local Office the next business day. Thus, if SCR receives a call from a client who claims he or she discovered a CP&P business card upon his or her return home, SCR will instruct the client to call that Local Office.

Case Situations Appropriate for Special Instructions

2-6-2006

Instructions requesting that SPRU Workers complete day child protective service investigations are unacceptable. Assigned Workers/Investigators are responsible for completing day investigations in accordance with CP&P policy.

Special Instructions are appropriate for, but should not be limited to, the following situations:

- To advise SCR when CP&P day staff, whose work extends after hours, may need assistance, guidance, or information concerning the handling of a specific case.
- To complete a child protective services investigation. To provide preventive intervention in response to a case development.
- To facilitate placement. Special Instructions information should include:
 - The authority for the placement/details about the court order, and
 - The identification of a specific placement resource -- a potential relative placement; an emergency resource home; a shelter placement, with the name of a contact person specified; an arrangement entered into with FCIU should placement become necessary; etc.
- To provide services related to children in placement, such as advising SCR of visitation arrangements for a weekend, and alternatives should the plan fall through; health-related issues affecting children in placement,

such as providing details regarding a child's illness or condition, need for medication and consent to treat, etc.

Information Provided when Leaving Instructions 2-21-2012

When contacting SCR to leave Special Instructions, day staff must provide:

- Assigned Worker/Supervisor identifying information and a viable means of contact after hours;
- Complete case identifying information, including case identification number, names of children and parents, home address, home telephone number, etc.;
- A concise, accurate description of the current case situation, including case history, when relevant;
- The plan to follow should the anticipated crisis develop;
- Resource identification and information (names, addresses, telephone numbers, when possible), especially if out-of-home placement is anticipated.
- An end date for the Special Instructions. Special Instructions must not exceed 30 days. (If, after 30 days, the situation is not resolved, day staff may again contact SCR to extend the Special Instructions.)
- The Worker may instruct that SCR contacts him or her, personally, to handle the crisis, rather than assigning to SPRU or taking other action.

SCR Referencing Special Instructions 2-21-2012

When taking telephone calls during the general course of screening activities after hours, SCR Screeners refer to the Special Instructions "screen" posted at SCR. When a call is received on a case/situation in which Special Instructions are posted, the Screener reviews the Special Instructions Report before initiating any action, while the caller is still on the telephone, when possible. Action is then initiated by the Screener, as appropriate, based on the new information provided by the caller, in conjunction with information contained in the Special Instructions Report.

If the SCR Screener takes a report on the case after hours, he or she forwards a copy of the completed Special Instructions report to the LO/IAIU through NJS.